



Department of Justice

High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project

Dallas, Texas

Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) is working to improve long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project (“25 Cities”) to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected using criteria that included perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, Dallas metropolitan area, local, state, and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

Participating Agencies

Partnership among Dallas area local, state, and federal public safety agencies has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution sets. Participating agencies have included—

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
- City of Dallas
- City of Fort Worth
- City of Plano
- Collin County
- Dallas County
- Denton County
- Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Tarrant County
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- U.S. Marshals Service
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service
- U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

Key Successes

When complete, DOJ and area stakeholders will successfully achieve basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the Dallas metropolitan area through the implementation of three interoperability solutions. The solutions introduce new wide-area interoperability resources and also support the use of existing, disparate communications systems. The new interoperability resources leverage these existing systems to extend coverage, capacity, and availability to more metropolitan area public safety agencies. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project’s interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to foster a working relationship between federal agencies and local and state agencies to resolve interoperability objectives for the area.

The first solution implemented two interoperability channels to support interagency communications during an emergency response. DOJ installed two 350-watt conventional narrowband very high frequency (VHF) repeaters in downtown Fort Worth and two additional repeaters in downtown Dallas. These repeaters, along with eight voted receivers, provide reliable, on-street, portable coverage of the interoperability channels throughout the metropolitan area. Hosted and maintained by the FBI, the new interoperability channels provide a means for wide-area interagency communications where the capability had not existed previously.

To extend connectivity to the new interoperability channels and existing VHF statewide mutual-aid channels, DOJ installed control stations at selected dispatch centers throughout the metropolitan area. Control stations were provided to ATF, CBP, DEA, ICE, USSS, and nine local dispatch centers to link disparate, out-of-band radio systems to the interoperability channels. DOJ also provided mobile radios for agencies accessing the interoperability channels in communications command vehicles. These control stations and mobile radios enable local, state, and federal agencies operating on disparate radio systems to communicate while using their own agency’s radio system.

In addition to the interoperability channels’ infrastructure and connectivity equipment, DOJ procured new audio gateway switch equipment to bridge connections for existing out-of-band, out-of-footprint radio users. DOJ installed a fixed audio gateway switch at the Denton County Sheriff’s Communications Center facility to tie the existing system to disparate radio systems to provide interoperability during emergency operations.

To support communications with disparate systems at an incident site, DOJ provided a transportable audio switch and associated radios to the City of Dallas to interconnect disparate radio systems at an emergency scene.

To coordinate common operating procedures for the new interoperability solutions, DOJ worked with the North Central Texas Council of Governments to identify federal participants to join the local and state agency members of the 16-county region. This collaborative effort will result in the development of operations guidance documents to address rules of use for operating on the interoperability channels. Stakeholders continue to meet to update documentation and discuss interoperability efforts in the Dallas metropolitan area.

Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and DOJ WMO provided scalable solutions designed to give additional agencies future access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with stakeholder support, will ensure continuity in addressing interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the Dallas metropolitan area.

Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative and the interoperability solutions, please contact—

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